

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00708 221557Z

40

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01 INRE-00 INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 L-03

SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-11 EUR-12 AF-06 /079 W

----- 100491

O 221332Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8275

S E C R E T BEIRUT 0708

WNINTEL, NOFORN NOCONTRACT, ORCON

FOR ATHERTON AND SAUDERS FROM LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, LE, SY

SUBJECT: VIEW ON LEBANESE CRISIS

1. OUR COMMENTS ARE OF NECESSITY AIMED MORE AT THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION THAN LONGER RUN SINCE SITUATION COULD CHANGE RADICALLY IN NEXT FEW DAYS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH MOSLEMS, PALESTINIANS AND SYRIANS ARE AT CROSSROAD. CHRISTIANS ARE SERIOUSLY NEGOTIATING FOR THE FIRST TIME. WE BELIEVE THIS HAS HAPPENED ONLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE SEEN ALL OTHER ALTERNATIVES DISAPPEARING.

2. KEY MAN AT PRESENT IS PRESIDENT FRANGIE, WHO UNDER PRESSURE HAS EMERGED AS SPOKESMAN FOR CHRISTIAN SIDE AND IS BEHAVING MORE MODERATELY IN NEGOTIATIONS THAN EITHER CHAMOUN OR GEMAYEL. HE SEEMS TO BE HOLDING CHRISTIAN POSITION OF MODEST CONCESSIONS IN RETURN FOR GUARANTEES AGAINST LARGER DIMINUTION OF CHRISTIAN PREROGATIVES BUT IS BEING CRITICIZED BY CHAMOUN AND TO SOME DEGREE GEMAYEL FOR NOT CONTINUING TOUGHER LINE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00708 221557Z

3. GEMAYEL MAY HAVE LOST SOME OF HIS CONTROL OVER

PHALANGE, WHO ARE LED IN BATTLE BY HIS SON BECHIR AND OTHER EXTREMISTS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT LOSS OF DAMOUR AND LARGE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN MUCH OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL SOBER PHALANGE VIEW, BUT THAT IS NOT CLEAR AT PRESENT AND PHALANGE MAY CONTINUE TO PUSH MILITARY SIDE OF THINGS RATHER THAN POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS. SIMILARLY CHAMOUN SEEMS ENGAGED ON EXERCISE DESIGNED LESS TOWARD SUCCESSFUL AGREEMENT UNDER SYRIAN AUSPICES AND MORE TOWARD DRAWING WESTERN INTERVENTION OF SOME SORT. CHAMOUN AT LEAST HAS NOT GIVEN UP IDEA THAT LEBANON MIGHT DO BETTER TO PUT ITS CASE TO U.N. WHERE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN FRIENDS CAN ASSIST CHRISTIANS. HAPPILY, HOWEVER, FRANGIE, ARMY LEADERS AND OTHER PROMINENT CHRISTIANS SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN THE MESSAGE THAT INTERVENTION OR OTHER EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE FROM U.S. AND WEST IS FORLORN HOPE AND THEY MUST MAKE THE BEST DEAL THEY CAN UNDER SYRIAN AUSPICES.

4. ALL THAT HAVING BEEN SAID. I AM STILL NOT CERTAIN THAT CHRISTIANS HAVE DRAWN ALL NECESSARY CONCLUSIONS FROM SITUATION. OUR BEST COURSE IS TO CONTINUE EMPHASIZING LACK OF REALISM IN HOPES OF WESTERN OR U.N. INTEVENTION.

5. PROBLEM OF PARTITION IS RELATED. IT COULD BE FALLBACK POSITION OF GEMAYEL, CHAMOUN AND EVEN FRANGIE. THAT WOULD DEPEND, HOWEVER, ON LEFTIST DEMANDS ESCALATING BEYOND THOSE PRESENTLY BEING MADE UNDER SYRIAN AUSPICES. SHOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, JUMBLATT CONTINUE TO HOLD OUT FOR SOME OF HIS MORE MAXIMUM DEMANDS, CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IS NOT LIKELY TO ABIDE BY ANY AGREEMENT UNDER SYRIAN AUSPICES AND LOOK TOWARD DE FACTO PARTITION AS WAY OF HOLDING THEIR OWN, PENDING RESCUE FROM ABROAD. ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE RULED OUT IN THESE CALCULATIONS. IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT, IF THINGS CAME TO THAT, FOR SOME NEW NEGOTIATING PROPOSAL TO EXIST. THAT IS THE PLACE, WE BELIEVE, FOR SAUVAGNARGUES MEDIATION AND ANY JOINT ARAB EFFORTS WHICH MIGHT ACCOMPANY, PRECEDE OR SUCCEED IT. FOR THE MOMENT, IMPORTANT THING IS TO CONCENTRATE CHRISTIAN MIND ON IMPOSSIBILITY OF BEATING THEIR OPPONENTS MILITARILY AND NEED TO SETTLE UNDER SYRIAN AUSPICES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00708 221557Z

IF SYRIANS CAN DELIVER LEFT WING LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS.

6. WITH EVENTS MOVING AS FAST AS THEY ARE, WE ARE NOT AT PRESENT ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE INSIGHT THAN SEPARATE REPORTING ALREADY HAS ON POSSIBLE INTER-ARAB POLICE FORCE, ARAFFAT'S ATTITUDE THERETO, AND EXACT SYRIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT BEYOND INTELLIGENCE REPORTS ARLEADY RECEIVED. BASED

MAINLY ON US DAO DAMASCUS REPORTS, WE COMPUTE PLA AND YARMUK
BRIGADE STRENGTH AS NOT MORE THAN 5000 IN LEBANON, AN
ESTIMATE CLOSELY PARALLELING THAT OF LEBANESE G-2.
WE HAVE ONLY SCATTERED REPORTS ON SAIQA ANF FATAH MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT.

7. AS REGARDS THE LEBANESE ARMY, STRONGLY PREJUDICED CHRISTIAN
AND MOSLEM SENIOR OFFICERS EXIST. HOWEVER THE CORPORATE
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMY RECOGNIZES ITS COMPARATIVE
MILITARY WEAKNESS AND THE SHORTSIGHTEDNESS OF CONTINUED CON-
FESSIONAL FIGHTING. THIS GROUP, ENCOMPASSING THE COMMANDER
OF THE ARMY, MAJOR GENERAL HAANA SAID, BRIGADIER MUUSA KANAAN,
AND COLONELS J. BOUSTANY, A. AHJJ, M. KORAYTEM, A. LAHAD,
M. SARDOUK AND S. TABBARAH, JUST TO NAME A FEW, IS READY TO ACT
TO PRESERVE THE NATION. HOWEVER, THE OPTION OF A LEBANESE
MILITARY COUP IS NO LONGER VIABLE BECAUSE THE ARMY HAS
BEEN FURTHER WEAKENED BY COMBAT LOSSES, DESERTIONS ALONG
CONFESSIONAL LINES AND DISPERSION OF UNITS THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY, WITHOUT ANY HOPE OF BEING ABLE TO CONCENTRATE.
THEREFORE, THIS GROUP WILL HAVE TO SEEK SOME FORM OF ACCOM-
MODATION WITH THE MORE POWERFUL SYRIAN AND PALESTINIAN FORCES.
CONTINUED FIGHTING UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WILL
MOST LIKELY RESULT IN DIVISION OF THE ARMY INTO CONFESSIONAL
GROUPS (AN EVENTUALITY FOR WHICH THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT
PRIOR POLITICAL PLANNING HAS OCCURRED) AND WHOLESALE
DESERTIONS TO THE OPPOSING FORCES.

8. WE SHALL BE HAPPY TO COMMENT FURTHER NEXT WEEK IN LIGHT
OF INTERVENING DEVELOPMENTS.
LAMBRAKIS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INTERVENTION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT00708
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760024-0787
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760133/aaaabcmg.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 NOV 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUN 2004 by MartinML>; WITHDRAWN <13 OCT 2004 by vogelfj, REFER TO CIA>; RELEASED <03 NOV 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEW ON LEBANESE CRISIS
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, LE, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006